

February 23, 2012

## Pressurized launcher boosts KC-130J Harvest HAWK capability

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In February, the U.S. Marine Corps received the first KC-130J Harvest HAWK modified with a pressurized standoff, precision-guided munitions launcher called the Derringer door.

NAVAL AIR SYSTEMS COMMAND, PATUXENT RIVER, Md. – Saying it will give Marines on the ground greater agility, a Navy program manager praised the modified paratroop door on the KC-130J Harvest Hercules Airborne Weapons Kit, or Harvest HAWK.

In February, the fleet received its first Harvest HAWK modified with a pressurized, standoff precision precision-guided munitions launcher called the Derringer door.

The modified KC-130J paratroop door provides the capability to load, launch and reload standoff precision-guided munitions while the aircraft remains pressurized.

“Current tactics, techniques and procedures used by the fleet are severely limited by the time required for aircrew to go on oxygen, depressurize the aircraft and lower the cargo ramp prior to firing standoff precision guided munitions,” said Capt. Michelle Guidry, program manager, Tactical Airlift, Adversary and Support Aircraft program (PMA-207). “The Derringer door removes these steps from the firing process and provides the Marine Corps with greater tactical agility.”

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Currently deployed Harvest HAWK equipped KC-130Js use a 10-round, common launch-tube system mounted on the cargo ramp. In this configuration, the aircraft must depressurize to employ Griffin missiles and the entire system must be removed to perform cargo operations.

“The Derringer door and storage rack do not interfere with the KC-130J cargo system and provide the fleet with greater flexibility to perform a wide range of missions,” said Chuck Gill, Harvest HAWK integrated product team lead for PMA-207.

Marine Aerial Refueling Transport Squadron (VMGR) 352 Harvest HAWK aircraft 167110 underwent modifications and flight testing for the Derringer door system in late 2011. Additional testing to support fleet use will take place in March 2012.

Changes to the aircraft for the Derringer door modification included the installation of two vertically oriented, standoff precision-guided munitions tubes, a common launch-tube storage rack for 10 standoff precision-guided munitions and battle-management system upgrades.

Harvest HAWK is a modular roll-on, roll-off weapons system, which also includes a fire-control console, in the aircraft's cargo compartment, where fire-control officers monitor and control the weapons and surveillance systems; an AN/AAQ-30 target sight system with infrared and electro-optic sensors mounted in the left underwing fuel tank; a launcher for four Hellfire missiles mounted in place of the left-hand air-to-air refueling pylon; and the Derringer door system for a 10-shot Griffin standoff precision-guided munitions launcher.

“Like the rest of the Harvest HAWK weapon system, the fleet can very quickly install or remove the Derringer door and its weapons rack,” Gill said.

The first KC-130J Harvest HAWK kit deployed with VMGR-352 in October 2010.

The Marine Corps has accepted delivery of three kits and expects delivery of three additional kits in the first half of fiscal year 2013.

The KC-130J platform serves the U.S. Marine Corps by providing air-to-air refueling; cargo and troop transportation and airborne delivery; medical evacuation; and battlefield illumination. A KC-130J equipped with Harvest HAWK maintains the traditional KC-130 capabilities, while adding the capability to conduct intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance and air-to-ground close air support missions.

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"When you're in theater, time is everything," Guidry said. "Our Harvest HAWK crews will now be able to provide close air support faster than ever, which gives the troops on the ground the added support they need."

Future KC-130J Harvest HAWK designated aircraft will be able to receive modifications necessary for the Derringer door system to be used when needed.